

AN EXCERPT FROM G'I'VE BEEN AROUND

As the troop train stopped, then backed into the sliding, we thought we were making just another stop since troop trains were mostly idiosyncratic. But this time we continued our journey backwards into the moonlit encampment: Maxwell Field at last! As we thrust our noses against the windows to get a glimpse of our new base, the train halted, then started again. Shortly afterwards, we heard the cadet officers, who had just boarded the train, making their way through the car giving us instructions. "You men are now at Maxwell Field," they said. "Take off your hat covers. It is against regulations to wear them on this field." Amazed and disappointed, we obediently removed our covers. Only two days before we had been issued our new cadet uniforms and hats. Then we had hastened to the PX where we proudly bought hat covers to protect our precious gadget hats from rain and dirt. Now, sadly, we stored the covers in our barracks bags where they were doomed to remain, probably, for posterity.

The train slowed, buckled, bumped, and discontinued its motion. It was three-thirty in the morning when we were given orders to dismount with our kit and to fall into columns of four at parade rest. Cadet officers, bedecked with white gloves and sabers that glittered in the moonlight, strode up and yelled a multitude of orders at us before we even had an opportunity to leave the train steps. "Look proud, misters, you're at Maxwell!" were their first words, and we looked as proud as we could for three-thirty in the morning after having spent thirty-six hours on the train.

Unusually efficient for the Army, the officers had us stand only for about ten minutes before we were given orders to march. Except for the rhythmic tramping of feet, the only sounds came from the clanking sabers and the low mutterings of "hup, hup, tree, foh" as we moved silently through the sleeping residential district of the field. Once in the cadet area, however, the situation was noticeably transformed with such phrases shouted at us as "All right, misters, look proud! Get those shoulders back and chins in!" Of course that was nigh impossible since we were each lugging two bulging, overpacked A and B bags.

When we reached our squadron area, we were commanded, "Squadron-o-o-on, halt!" We did.

"Lef-f-ft, face!" That we also did.

Then followed the SOP roll call, after which, as our names were called a second time, we dutifully fell out and followed cadet officers to our quarters. Thereafter, confusion prevailed as we were given innumerable instructions all at once as to where we should stow our equipment, how we should make up our sacks, how we should brush our teeth, and other trivial details.

First call is at five o'clock, we were told, and, as it was already four, there was not much use in hitting the sack for only an hour. Instead, we preferred to spend the time more profitably by shining our shoes, shaving, and showering. We opened our A bags and pulled out fresh uniforms, but we were dismayed to find them so rumpled. But then, what else could we expect after having them crammed into the bags with all our other belongings.

The hour passed quickly, and promptly at five, the loudspeaker in our room blared forth with the first call of the day. Immediately, cadet officers appeared on the stoop and ordered, "Fall out on the double, misters! Hit a p-rade rest!" (I found out later that this was to be a routine performance each morning for the next eight weeks.) We eager beavers fell out on the double, if not faster, but we were careful, nevertheless, not to scuff our highly polished shoes. After the usual-but-brief roll call, we were marched to breakfast, singing as we paced along at a hundred and twenty-eight cadence, "Off we go into the wild blue yonder." We were certainly a bunch of eager beavers that morning, but rightly so, perhaps, because we were then confidently launched on the last leg of our training we were actually to sprout wings.

Written by Frank H. Smoker, Jr. October 1946
for Professor John Byerly's
Freshman English Class
Franklin & Marshall College

Unique Coincidence Results In Saving Former Commander

Each of the three Bomber Divisions in the 8th AF had one small scouting unit (fighter) which consisted of ex-leader Bomber Pilots. Our 1st Bombardment Division had the 1st Scouting Force, which had a radio, call sign "Buckeye Red!"

As I got close to completing my tour of 35 B-17 missions I requested a transfer to this 1st Scouting Force for a second tour of combat duty. My Commander, Col. Cox, was reluctant to recommend the transfer. He discussed the hazards of Bomber "jockeys" flying fighters. Also, if I volunteered to stay for a second tour, he even promised a promotion. He preferred to have experienced pilots stay with the 325th. A second tour in Bombers was 15 missions.

Finally Col. Cox did approve my request. What makes the story more interesting was his comment as I was preparing to leave the 92nd. He stated that he would probably regret his decision some day.

About three months later, around March, 1945, I was leading a flight of four P-51's when we noticed a lone B-17 far to the side of the long Bomber column. Then a flight of FW-90's appeared and dove toward them. We also dove and the Focke Wulfs withdrew. I chose to protect the Fortress rather than pursue the enemy. Then I recognized that the B-17 was from the 92nd. It was our stripped down (guns removed) Q-Queeny, used for photo purposes. It had moved away from the other Forts in order to take pictures of the formations. I slowly slid toward the B-17, from the side, indicating that we were "little friends." As we flew wing tip to wing tip I removed my oxygen mask to show my identity (Not to break radio silence for this purpose). The Pilot in the right seat did likewise, and it was Col. Cox! What a surprise and a certain feeling of satisfaction, remembering his reluctance to have me transfer to fighters. After turning the flight over to the element leader I flew back to Podington with Q-Queeny. There was a high probability that they would have been shot down if our flight was not there.

In one of the pictures Col. Cox is shaking my hand thanking me. The other person is Col. Moose Hardin. I can't remember if Moose was flying in the plane, or in what capacity he was involved. There was so much excitement as people gathered around the Mustang—and some details have definitely faded through the years.

Note: The 325th insignia on the flight jacket. Also, the 92nd "B" marking on the tail of the B-17 showing under the nose of my Mustang.

I hope to make San Antonio next October.

Sincerely,
Don Taurone
26 Maravista Rd.
Worcester, MA 01616-2912



Left: Col. "Moose" Hardin; Center: Lt. Don Taurone; Right: Col. Cox